HILL FIELD, AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS HANGER
(Hill Field, Building 1)
(Hill Field, Building 101)
(Hill Field, Transient Hangar)
5970 Southgate Avenue
Layton Vicinity
Davis County
Utah

HAER No. UT-85-A

HAER
UTAH
6-LAY.V,
2A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
Rocky Mountain System Support Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD HAER UTAH 6-LAY.V, 2A-

HILL FIELD, AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS HANGAR
(HILL FIELD, BUILDING 1)
(HILL FIELD, BUILDING 101)
(HILL FIELD, TRANSIENT HANGAR)

HAER No. UT-85-A

Location: 5970 Southgate Avenue, Hill Air Force Base, Layton Vicinity, Davis County, Utah

UTM: 12-418000-4552420

Date of Construction: 1941

Architect: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Builder: Unknown

Present Owner: Hill Air Force Base

Present Use: Hangar

Significance: The primary mission of the Hill Field during and after World War II was to repair, maintain, and store aircraft, and also to receive, store and supply air materiel. Building 1, the Aircraft Operations Hangar, provided shelter for planes that were awaiting test flights and contained the original air traffic control tower.

History: Preliminary grading for the runways that served Hill Field began in November 1938 as a WPA project, but they were not paved until almost two years later. Once the final layout and survey for the runway paving was finalized in July 1940, construction could begin on Building 1 -- one of the first buildings constructed -- which occupies the intersection of Runways 3 and 4. This large building took more than one year to complete. While Building 1 was under construction, the air field was used for little more than an emergency landing field since it lacked night lighting. Runway and flight operations were controlled from the air traffic control tower that was located at the top of the roof of Building 1.

Building 1 was completed two months before the official outbreak of World War II. The first major project was to manage planes that were transferred to Ogden Air Depot from the coast as a precaution against possible coastal bombing. The airfield was covered with two feet of snow at the time, and waterproof tarpaulin covers for wheels and brakes were not available. The brake drums and wheels of the aircraft became frozen solid from snow and moisture, so they could only be moved on skids, until Lt. Dart devised a set of skis to use under the wheels of the planes, which were then drawn by tugs. Building 1, the Operations Hangar, was utilized to thaw the planes out two or three at a time, an extremely slow process.

Practically every section in Engineering was assigned to this task, and all available assistance was drafted until the planes were properly prepared for storage in early spring of 1942. All available key personnel worked both day and night to process these aircraft, even though they did not receive overtime pay.

Later in the war, the Aircraft Operations Hangar housed the Flight Test Section, which was organized under Mr. Perry Boren in January 1942. Recently completed and inspected aircraft were transferred to Building 1 from the Aircraft Repair Hangars (Building 225). The Flight Test Section received, serviced, and maintained these planes in a flyable condition until test flights were completed. In the beginning, overlapping day and swing shifts (6:00am - 2:30pm and 11:30am - 8:00pm) enabled planes to be prepared for test flight by 8:00am, and to be parked and secured after 4:00pm with only two shifts. After the Pearl Harbor Attack, however, technicians worked in three shifts to staff the Hangar at all times.

General Description: Building 1 is a large steel and brick aircraft repair hangar that occupies a pivotal position on Hill Field's Runway. The building consists of one central hangar with a two story brick wing on both the east and west sides.

The steel frame building is constructed over a concrete foundation and floor. Segmentally arched steel trusses support the roof line and vertical corrugated siding covers most of the exterior of the building. The ends of the hangar are equipped with sliding leaf doors made of steel and glass which run most of the length of the elevation. Just above these doors, at the center of the hatched elevation, is a small tail door which opens to accommodate the tails of larger aircraft.

The two-story brick wings located to the north and south of the hangar held administrative offices. These wings are constructed of beige brick laid in six-course American bond. Continuous concrete bands that circle the administrative section of the building articulate the window lintels and sills on both floors.

A large modern office facility was added to the south side of the hangar after 1955. The interior of the administrative wings have been remodeled several times to meet the contemporary requirements of the Base.